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The working classes are also leaving Brussels. An analysis of the suburbanisation of low-income populations

Les classes populaires aussi quittent Bruxelles. Une analyse de la périurbanisation des populations à bas revenus

Ook de volksklassen verhuizen uit Brussel. Een analyse van de randverstedelijking van de bevolkingsgroepen met een laag inkomen

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Introduction

- 1 Today, the urban working classes are subject to dual pressure, both social and spatial. On the one hand, at social level, the destructuring of the salary model, the structural shortage of jobs and the instability of statuses in metropolitan economies worsen the inequalities as well as social and economic insecurity, in particular for the populations at the bottom of the social hierarchy [Castel, 2003; Siblot *et al.*, 2015]. Conversely, at urban level, the reinforcement of the concentration of wealth and high added value activities and command functions in certain metropolises goes hand in hand with a rise in rental income in central urban spaces. This leads to a structural rise in the cost of housing in the city in particular, all the more pronounced where metropolisation processes are most active and receive the most political support [Harvey, 2011; Madden and Marcuse, 2016].
- 2 However, the working classes have not disappeared in cities or in metropolitan areas. Their profiles evolve and become more diverse, while their living, housing and working conditions become more complicated. Their numbers remain high, even in the city. Even in urban areas such as Paris or London, where social selection is extremely strong, the

working classes still make up a significant share of the population in central and surrounding neighbourhoods [Davidson and Wyly, 2012; Clerval, 2013]. In Brussels, following questioning by the regional government, the report by Verdonck *et al.* [2012] indicated that 42 % of households in the Region were situated below the middle class,¹ 34 % were part of the middle class and 24 % belonged to the upper categories [Verdonck *et al.*, 2012].

- 3 The urban working classes are subject to this dual pressure, both social and urban, in various ways and at several levels, in particular at residential level. The main focus of this article is thus to analyse the geographical expansion of the residential strategies of working-class households in this context of pressure. One of these strategies consists in trying to remain in the city centre in order to “*resist exile*” [Dietrich-Ragon, 2014], even if it means having to put up with conditions of dilapidated or insecure housing [Giroud, 2011; Fijalkow and Lévy-Vroelant, 2016]. Another strategy consists in leaving the dense neighbourhoods of the central parts of the urban area and living in a suburban municipality or a small city on the outskirts of the urban area. The suburbanisation of the working classes therefore emerges, of which little is known, as it has been the object of very few studies.
- 4 In Brussels, the analysis of suburbanisation has been dominated by the exclusive representation of an “urban exodus of the middle classes” [Grimmeau *et al.*, 2013], a priority target of the policies for a “return to the city” used by the Brussels regional authorities.² However, this is not the only type of suburbanisation, as working-class households are also leaving the city centre. Furthermore, these residential working-class movements are a challenge for Brussels, as regards the future of central working-class neighbourhoods, as well as the loss of a category of employee – working-class yet stable.
- 5 Following the works which drew attention to these processes of “modest suburbanisation” [De Maesschalk *et al.*, 2015; Marissal *et al.*, 2013 – in particular], this article focuses specifically on the residential pathways of people with a low income who leave the central working-class neighbourhoods of Brussels to live outside the boundaries of the Brussels-Capital Region (while remaining in Belgium). In particular, through a quantitative and geographical analysis, we shall attempt to identify the areas of destination of these low-income populations who have moved out of Brussels in recent years.

1. The working classes and their residential pathways

- 6 Firstly, what is meant by *working classes* today? Many sociologists agree that this term represents a social group *in itself*, i.e. that the individuals who form this group do not necessarily imagine belonging to this social class. These working classes are divided in many ways, yet share at least two major characteristics: on the one hand, the modestness of their economic capital, which places them in an inferior position in particular on the property market; on the other hand, a low cultural capital, which puts them at a disadvantage in education as well as on the job market, and involves a depreciation (and even a stigmatisation) of their cultural *tastes* and practices [Schwartz, 2011; Wright, 2005].
- 7 Moreover, various works have shown that the urban working classes are also characterised by a social capital anchored locally: in the urban space, knowledge and practices are put to use, helping to ensure the livelihood of individuals [Cailly, 2007;

Vignal, 2016; Dietrich-Ragon, 2014; Fol, 2009]. This involves, for example, the concentration of resources, allowing people to travel on foot [Omhovère, 2016], the presence of ethnic businesses where it is possible to speak one's mother tongue [Guérin-Pace *et al.*, 2006], possibilities for housing which is less expensive than elsewhere or less demanding as regards people's administrative situation, etc.

- 8 However, like the middle classes, the working classes represent multiple realities, in which the social sciences researcher may detect structuring elements. Stability (full-time stable employment, belonging to a long-standing family structure) would be one of the essential fault lines within the working classes, in particular at a time when the salary model is crumbling, as it allows one to project oneself into the future and to have a sense of security [Standing, 2014]. More generally, the analysis of residential behaviour may also be considered as an interesting means to better understand the internal divides within the working classes, in particular because the necessary resources for certain migrations may be divisive [Girard *et al.*, 2013; Girard, 2014].
- 9 The residential migrations of the working classes have been the object of studies in different contexts. In France in particular, working class suburbanisation has been studied often: leaving the city for more distant areas, even if it means being cut off from social and family relations [Girard *et al.*, 2013; Fol, 2009]. The access to property is the driving force behind a large part of these residential migrations, above all because only a small portion of the property in city centres is accessible to the working classes [Lambert, 2015]. For several years, the arrival of the working classes on the outskirts also concerns households with an immigrant background [Lambert, 2015; Cartier *et al.*, 2008]. They become home owners in areas where they are a minority, and may find themselves marginalised [Lambert 2015; Cartier *et al.*, 2008]. Becoming a home owner – especially in a context of the destructuring of salaried employment – may be a form of security: *at least owning a house* [Lambert, 2015]. Furthermore, it would be simplistic to consider that suburbanisation is a downgrade. For these households, suburbanisation is not necessarily a relegation, and may be experienced as “access to a positive residential status” (that of home owner) [Girard, 2014: 87].
- 10 In Brussels, the residential pathways of the working classes are influenced greatly by a social and spatial structure marked by a dichotomy between central working-class neighbourhoods (the “poor area”) and municipalities outside the centre (in the Region) or more well-to-do suburban municipalities (outside the Region). In the city centre, given the scarcity of social housing (only 7,26 % of the stock³ in 2016), most disadvantaged households find housing in the private rental market. It therefore operates as a “*de facto* social housing” stock, made up of poor quality housing which is cheaper or more accessible than anywhere else in the city [Dessouroux *et al.*, 2016]. The existence, age and property structure of this rental stock are essential for the preservation of working-class neighbourhoods in Brussels. The central working-class neighbourhoods must deal with the dynamics of gentrification: gradually, new inhabitants with higher socioeconomic or sociocultural profiles, move there and replace some of the former inhabitants who are less well-off or who have a lower level of education [Van Criekingen, 2006, 2009; Romainville, 2010]. At the same time, these central working-class neighbourhoods remain the areas of choice for foreign populations from poor countries [Grippa *et al.*, 2015].
- 11 This social and spatial dichotomy has also been the result of intense suburbanisation of young middle-class households since the 1950s. Since that time, the households leaving the Brussels-Capital Region have always tended to be younger and richer than the

average inhabitants of the Region, leading to an impoverishment of the Brussels-Capital Region [Eggerickx *et al.*, 2007; Grimmeau *et al.*, 2012; De Maesschalck *et al.*, 2015].

- 12 Nevertheless, this profile is evolving: in particular, there is a greater ethnic diversity among the populations leaving the Region, half of them being of non-Belgian origin [De Maesschalck *et al.*, 2015]. Moreover, among the people who leave Brussels to go elsewhere in Belgium, there is more social diversity than there was 20 years ago. Many low-income households leave the city, although most of them have at least one member who works [De Maesschalck *et al.*, 2015]. All in all, “this migratory movement (of suburbanisation) is no longer the privilege of the Belgian middle class alone” [De Maesschalck *et al.*, 2015, 5] even though these categories still represent the majority of those who leave [De Maesschalck *et al.*, 2015; Charlier *et al.*, 2016].
- 13 This greater diversity is also seen in the places of arrival of new suburban residents. In addition to the well-to-do municipalities of the nearby outskirts, especially to the north, east and southeast of the urban area, there are new areas of destination. For the young middle-class households, this includes the more remote municipalities to the east and west, as well as to the north, where property prices are more affordable [Eggerickx *et al.*, 2007]. This also includes the municipalities in the Antwerp-Brussels-Charleroi industrial area, which appeal to the less well-off and the lower middle classes, probably due to their proximity to Brussels and the lower property prices. Thus, the socioeconomic structure of Brussels “in quadrants” is also seen on the outskirts, and the analysis carried out by De Maesschalck *et al.* [2015] on Flemish Brabant shows that the households in the highest income quartile move especially to the nearby outlying municipalities to the north (Asse), east (Zaventem) and along the canal (Vilvoorde to the north and Sint Peeters Leeuw to the south), while the well-to-do areas to the southeast remain the preferred destinations of households with the highest income. This trend is also observed in the more remote outskirts, where the municipalities along the Zenne and north Hainaut are also the preferred destinations of disadvantaged households [Charlier *et al.*, 2016]. Furthermore, the small former industrial cities – particularly in Wallonia – are also increasingly common destinations for people from Brussels [Marissal *et al.*, 2013].
- 14 The residential migrations outside Brussels (within Belgium) of working-class households have therefore been analysed by several authors, often from a demographic angle related to the stages of life⁴ (moving out of the parental home, living as a couple, parenthood, etc.), without focusing their research specifically on this category. This article is aimed at supplementing the knowledge by reviewing the residential movements of the working classes, in particular from the central working-class neighbourhoods of Brussels.

2. The suburbanisation of Brussels working classes in figures

- 15 It should not be assumed that the working classes in Brussels are immobile and confined to the neighbourhoods in the “poor area” of the Region. While there is a negative migratory balance between the Region and its outskirts, it is not only so for the middle and upper classes. The working classes are also inclined to leave the capital. We shall provide an up-to-date measurement of these movements and identify precisely the places of arrival of these populations.

2.1. Methodology

- 16 The study area which we have focused on⁵ extends along the industrial area to the north and south of Brussels: from Antwerp to the south of the “boot” of Hainaut (figure 1). This area allows the geographically interlinked territories to be taken into account, connected by several daily mobility corridors, but divided by socioeconomic, historical and linguistic discontinuity. The places of arrival outside the Brussels-Capital Region are identified according to the former municipalities (the entities which existed before the amalgamation of the municipalities in 1975).

Figure 1.

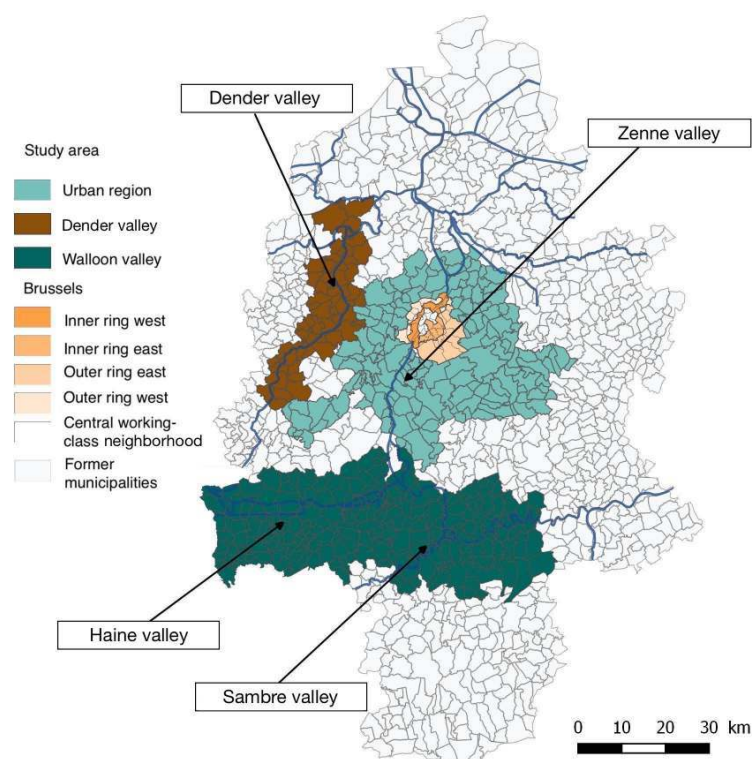
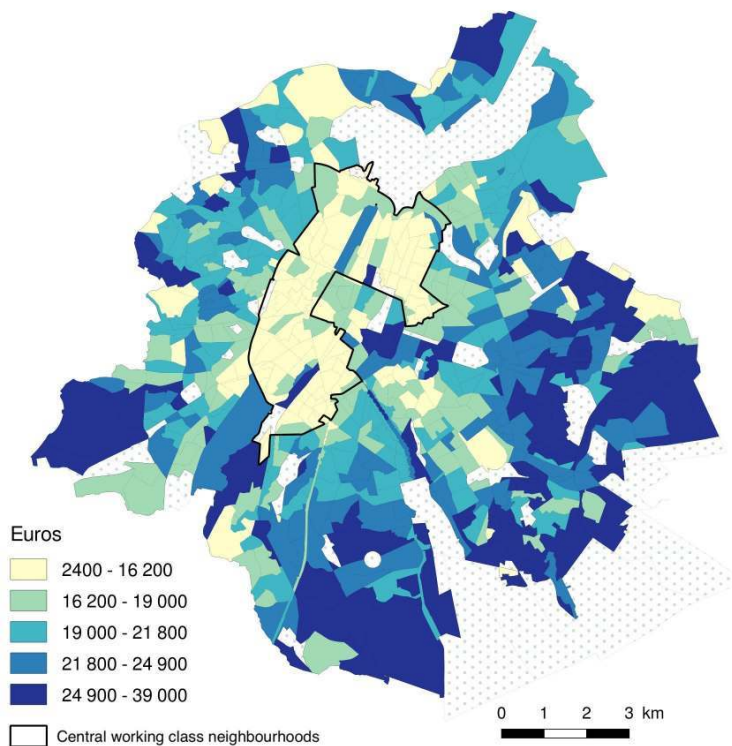


Figure 2. Median income per tax declaration in Brussels in 2013 and spatial definition of the central working-class neighbourhoods



SOURCE: STATBEL 2016, PROCESSING S. DE LAET

- 17 In Brussels, we have decided to focus on the departures from the working-class neighbourhoods of the city centre (figure 2). This area was identified according to several socioeconomic indicators (income, proportion of unemployed people, proportion of tenants) as well as a criterion of contiguity, and covers the EDRLR area partially but not totally. While this space cannot be considered as a working-class neighbourhood as such, it may be seen as a group of working-class neighbourhoods *end to end*. In this 14 km² space, there are 251 000 inhabitants, and the rate of unemployment in 2013 was 34 %.
- 18 The data used for this article come from the *Banque Carrefour de la Sécurité sociale* (BCSS).⁶ They allow us to identify residential movements according to household income during the period between 2005 and 2013. More precisely, they represent the sum of three net flows (2005-2008, 2008-2010, 2010-2013).⁷ These data allow us to know the number of times a person moved house during the period, but we only know the place of departure and place of arrival at the beginning and end of each period. We are therefore not able to identify multiple moves within the same calendar year, as well as the intermediate location of people who moved house more than once in each period. As regards income, we use the notion of “reconstituted income” calculated by BCSS based on a combination of income from work and social security benefits. This amount therefore allows an approximation of the income available to households. The main bias of these data is that the income from capital (immovable⁸ and movable) is not available and is therefore not integrated into this measurement. We have combined this measurement of available income to calculate income per consumption unit, taking into account the number of people in each household and their age.⁹ This available income per consumption unit was then divided into deciles.¹⁰ The final indicator which we are working with here is

therefore the *decile of relative available income of the household*. In this paper, we consider as a proxy of the working classes the first three deciles of income, which represent 43 % of the population of the Brussels-Capital Region. The 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th deciles represent the middle classes, and the 8th, 9th and 10th deciles represent the upper classes. Admittedly, this variable alone does not allow a formal identification of the people who belong to the working classes. We nevertheless consider this indicator to be pertinent, as our objective is to identify residential pathways and areas of destination, and not to determine the precise number of people who belong to the working classes.

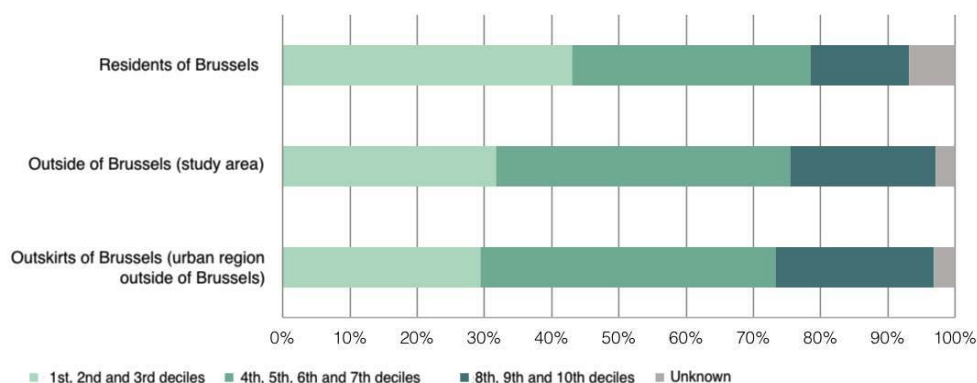
Table 1. Migratory balance between the Brussels-Capital Region and the rest of the study area, according to income (groups of deciles, sum of three net flows 2005-2008, 2008-2010 and 2010-2013)

	1st, 2nd and 3rd deciles	4th, 5th, 6th and 7th deciles	8th, 9th and 10th deciles	Entire population
Incoming-outgoing / Total population	-2,22 %	-3,25 %	-3,4 %	-2,73 %

SOURCE: BCSS, PROCESSING S. DE LAET (2017)

- 19 Table 1 shows that the migratory balance between Brussels and the rest of the study area is negative for the entire population, as well as for each income group. Thus, regardless of their income, in terms of internal migrations, there are more people from each of the categories who leave Brussels than who move to Brussels.

Figure 3. Structure of the resident and departing population of the Brussels-Capital Region according to income (groups of deciles, sum of three net flows 2005-2008, 2008-2010 and 2010-2013)



AVERAGE STRUCTURE OF THE RESIDENT POPULATION: NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN EACH DECILE GROUP (2005, 2008, 2010) / 3.

AVERAGE YEARLY DEPARTURES: SUM OF THE NET FLOWS OF THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO LEAVE DURING THE THREE PERIODS / 8.

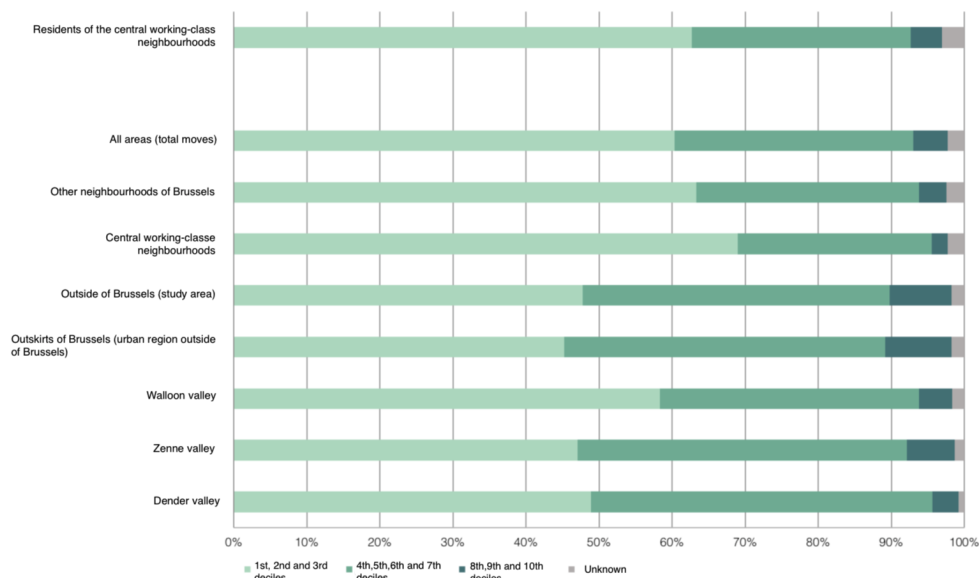
NOTE: THE DEFINITION OF THE STUDY AREA EXPLAINS THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN OUR DATA AND THE STUDIES MENTIONED. WHEN HAINAUT IS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT, THE LOW DECILES REPRESENT A LARGER PROPORTION OF THOSE WHO LEAVE THAN WHEN FLEMISH BRABANT IS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. WITHOUT ARDENNES AND THE COAST, WE MISS PART OF THE RETIREMENT (OR PRE-RETIREMENT) MIGRATIONS.

SOURCE: BCSS, PROCESSING S. DE LAET (2017)

- 20 As seen in figure 3, close to one third (32 %) of those who leave the Brussels-Capital Region belong to the lowest-income categories. This movement is therefore not at all insignificant, even if it is sub-specific for this category (accounting for 43 % of the population of Brussels) unlike the middle classes (44 % of departures for 35 % of the inhabitants) and upper classes (21 % of departures for 15 % of the inhabitants). As regards departures to the outskirts (roughly speaking, the employment area)¹¹ of Brussels, the proportion of the lowest income populations is lower, but nevertheless also represents close to one third of the departures from Brussels (i.e. the Brussels Urban Region as defined by Van Hecke *et al.* in 2009 based on the 2001 census).
- 21 The presentation of results is organised into three sections. First, the places of destination of the working classes who leave the central neighbourhoods of Brussels are highlighted, and then the balance between the central working-class neighbourhoods and our study area is analysed for this population. Finally, we shall determine whether the destinations identified distinguish different profiles among people with a low income.

2.2. Departures from the central working-class neighbourhoods: which destinations?

Figure 4. Structure of the resident and departing population in central working-class neighbourhoods according to income (groups of deciles, sum of three net flows 2005-2008, 2008-2010 and 2010-2013)



AVERAGE STRUCTURE OF THE RESIDENT POPULATION: NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN EACH DECILE GROUP (2005, 2008, 2010) / 3.

AVERAGE YEARLY DEPARTURES: SUM OF THE NET FLOWS OF THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO LEAVE DURING THE THREE PERIODS / 8.

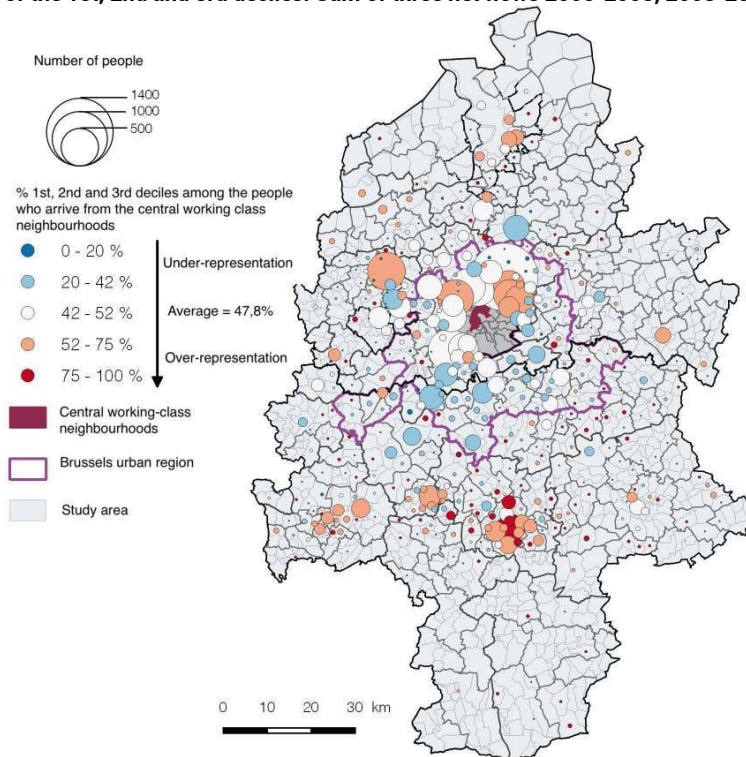
SOURCE: BCSS, PROCESSING S. DE LAET (2017)

- 22 The lowest-income categories represent 63 % of the inhabitants of the central working-class neighbourhoods and account for 60 % of the total number of people who have left the central working-class neighbourhoods during the period considered. In terms of destination, figure 4 also shows that the low-income populations are more inclined than the other categories to relocate within the same space: populations in the first three

deciles represent close to 70 % of relocations within the central working-class neighbourhoods.

- 23 As regards the moves outside the Region from the central working-class neighbourhoods, almost half (48 %) involve people with a low income, which represents an estimated yearly volume of just under 3 000 people.¹² Once again, in relative terms, suburbanisation originating in these neighbourhoods is more specific for the middle- and high-income groups, but the movements of those with the lowest income are equivalent in terms of volume.

Figure 5. Residential migrations from central working-class neighbourhoods (to the rest of the study area) of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd deciles. Sum of three net flows 2005-2008, 2008-2010 and



2010-2013

Income deciles: reconstituted household income deciles.

Indicator: Number of people from the 1st, 2nd and 3rd deciles arriving in the former municipality from the central working-class neighbourhoods / all of the people arriving in the former municipality from the central working-class neighbourhoods *100

SOURCE: BCSS, PROCESSING S. DE LAET (2017)

- 24 Let us now analyse their geographical expansion. Figure 5 represents the migrations from the central working-class neighbourhoods of Brussels for the first three deciles and their significance among those who come from the central neighbourhoods.¹³ It provides us with two pieces of information: where the people who leave the central working-class neighbourhoods move to on the outskirts *in terms of volume* (size of the circles), and what the *specific* places of destination are for these low-income migrants (colour of the circles).
- 25 In terms of volume, the immediate northwest outskirts in Flanders is the area which receives the most households from the 1st, 2nd and 3rd deciles leaving Brussels. This observation is in keeping with the quadrant logic identified by De Maesschalck *et al.* (2015): in terms of absolute value, the relocations are the most significant in the northwest of the Region (Dilbeek, Zellik, Asse, etc.). 51 % of departures from the central

working-class neighbourhoods from the first three deciles end up in the urban region (as defined by Van Hecke *et al.*, 2009) of Brussels.

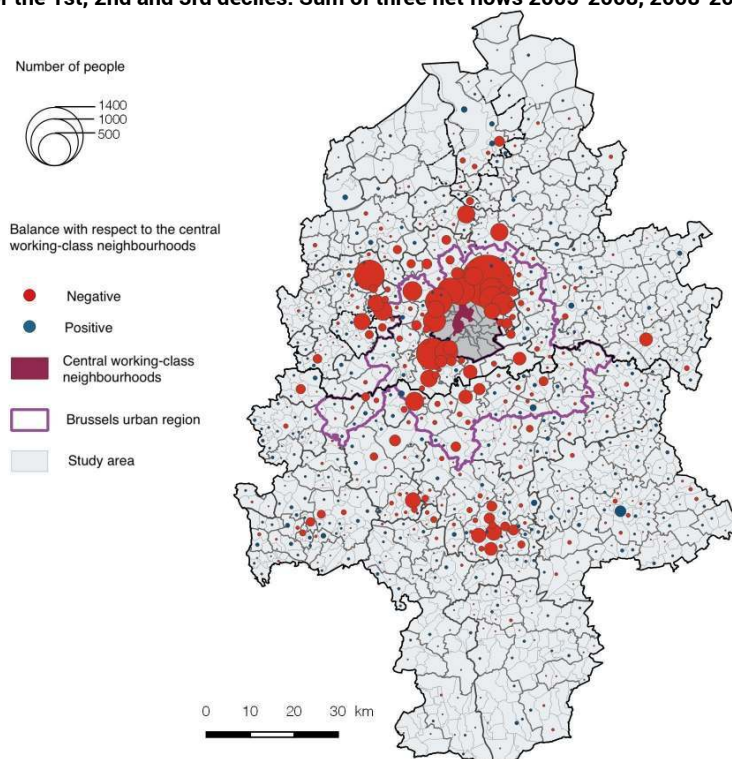
- 26 When we look at the specificity¹⁴ of these movements, other places stand out:
- Above all, the former industrial valleys: the Zenne valley which partially covers the immediate outskirts to the north (Machelen, Diegem); the Dender valley (Alost); and even more significantly, that of the Haine (Jemappes, Mons, Frameries, Maurage, Manage, etc.) and the Sambre (Charleroi, Marcinelle, Saint-Servais in Namur, etc.).
 - The municipality of Charleroi as well as the places bordering it (Marcinelle, Couillet, Marchienne-au-Pont, etc.).
 - The municipalities on the outskirts of Antwerp, especially those with a low status on the outskirts to the south (Hoboken) and the east (Borgerhout, Deurne, etc.).
- 27 These places share some socioeconomic and historical characteristics: they are former industrial areas, valleys or cities. Former workers' housing is found there, as well as dwellings which are cheaper than in Brussels. Several of these former municipalities have areas which are part of "working-class neighbourhoods" (Marcinelle, La Louvière, etc.). In the case of municipalities around Antwerp, a significant part of the population of these municipalities is from northern Africa and Turkey.
- 28 This geography is not typical with respect to the suburbanisation seen in Brussels, and represents a smaller volume than the movements towards Walloon Brabant and Flemish Brabant.

2.3. Migratory balance of the central working-class neighbourhoods for the first deciles

- 29 It is understood that the movements do not always involve departures from Brussels (and the central working-class neighbourhoods) towards the outskirts, and their analysis allows the migratory balance to be taken into account.
- 30 As seen in figure 6 (map of migratory balances), the migratory balance is mostly negative for the central working-class neighbourhoods. This means that the departures from Brussels of the populations from the first three deciles are not compensated for by arrivals in Brussels from elsewhere in Belgium. However, these departures are more than compensated for by international migrations.
- 31 The places which receive the most inhabitants from the central working-class neighbourhoods from the 1st, 2nd and 3rd deciles are located on the northern outskirts close to the regional borders and along the nearby Zenne valley (to Tubize in the south and Vilvoorde in the north). This result corroborates the conclusions of Grippa *et al.* [2015] regarding the many short-distance moves from the working-class neighbourhoods to neighbouring places by low- and medium-income households. This is followed by some former municipalities of the Dender valley (Alost, Liedekerke), and finally, by the valleys of the Haine and the Sambre.
- 32 As regards the big cities (Mons, La Louvière, Charleroi, Antwerp), the insignificant balances show a high level of migratory movements from and towards the central working-class neighbourhoods.
- 33 In some places, the number of people departing for the central working-class neighbourhoods is higher than the number of people arriving, their numbers are low, and the absolute values are low. However, it may be noted that these cities are above all

university cities (Namur, Louvain-la-Neuve, Leuven, Antwerp). This is in keeping with the fact that the municipalities of the central working-class neighbourhoods receive an increasingly significant number of students [Vaesen and Wayens, 2014] and young people who have just finished their studies, testifying to a new interest in these areas and the property pressure which exists there.

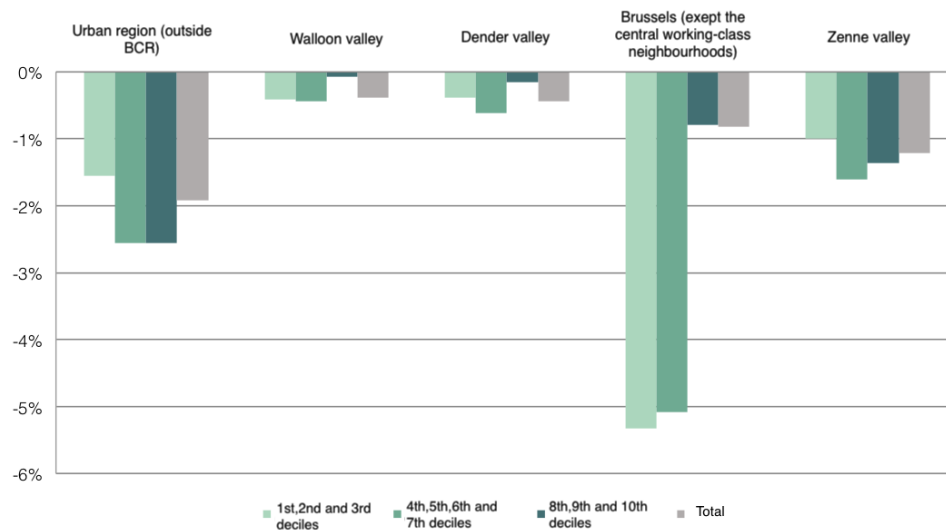
Figure 6. Migratory balance between the central working-class neighbourhoods and the study area, for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd deciles. Sum of three net flows 2005-2008, 2008-2010 and 2010-2013.



**INCOME DECILES: RECONSTITUTED HOUSEHOLD INCOME DECILES.
BALANCE BETWEEN THE CENTRAL WORKING-CLASS NEIGHBOURHOODS AND THE FORMER
MUNICIPALITIES OF THE STUDY AREA.**

SOURCE: BCSS, PROCESSING S. DE LAET (2017)

Figure 7. Migratory balance between the central working-class neighbourhoods and the Brussels Urban Region, the Walloon valley, the Dender valley, the other parts of Brussels and the Zenne valley. According to income (groups of deciles, sum of three net flows 2005-2008, 2008-2010 and 2010-2013)



MIGRATORY BALANCE: (INCOMING-OUTGOING)/TOTAL POPULATION

SOURCE: BCSS, PROCESSING S. DE LAET (2017)

- 34 All in all, the departure of the Brussels working class is far from insignificant. The city is often portrayed as a capital which is being deserted massively by its middle class; this fact cannot at all be ignored, but it must not overshadow the other movements.
- 35 In terms of volume, the working-class households which leave the Region move to the suburban areas of Brussels, in particular the outskirts north of the city. In relative values, however, the traditionally working-class areas (industrial valleys and cities) appear to be most specific to the working class.
- 36 These destinations have been identified in previous works [De Maesschalk *et al.*, 2015; Marissal *et al.*, 2013; Eggerickx *et al.*, 2007]. We may therefore say that the geographical space outlined by these migrations outside the Region has been relatively stable for at least fifteen years. Nevertheless, there has been a certain evolution concerning municipalities along the canal, such as Vilvoorde and Tubize. These municipalities do not appear to be “specific” to the working classes on our maps, but rather to the middle classes. We may therefore make the hypothesis of an evolution whereby these municipalities are becoming areas of destination valued by the middle classes, due to the fact that they are not able to access other suburban areas which have become too expensive or crowded.

3. Varying profiles according to the places of destination

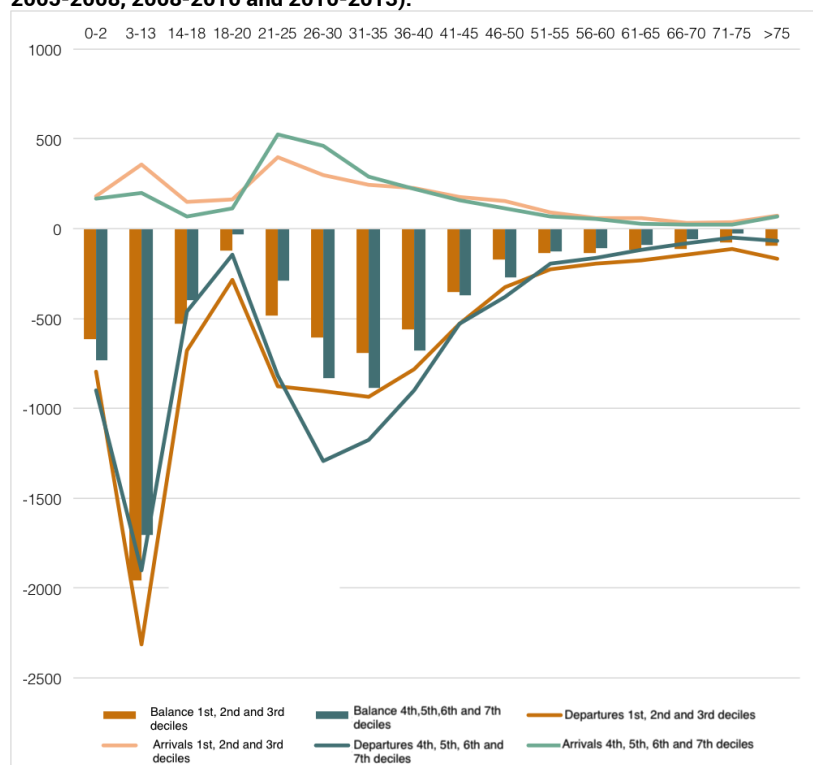
- 37 Among the low-income people who leave the central working-class neighbourhoods of Brussels, is it possible to identify variations in the profiles according to the places of destination? Does the social and spatial proximity between the central working-class neighbourhoods and the places of destination of low-income households leaving Brussels

allow us to conclude that the same types of migration are taking place? In other words, do the people who leave the central working-class neighbourhoods to live outside of Brussels have the same profile according to the places of destination? In order to answer this question, we shall use two indicators: the age profile of those who arrive and those who leave, and the position on the job market (with the exception of students).

3.1. Age profile

- 38 Generally speaking, it is well established that the residential migrations are related essentially to the stage of life [Eggerickx *et al.*, 2007; Grimmeau *et al.*, 2012]. Most often, the young households (which have the possibility) move house when their families have grown or are about to grow. They therefore look for housing of a certain size, which is usually more available and cheaper outside the central neighbourhoods.
- 39 The age structure of migrations between the central working-class neighbourhoods and the Brussels Urban Region (outside the Brussels-Capital Region) (figure 8) compares the “working-class” and “middle-class” groups of deciles. As we can see, the age profile of those who leave is close for these two income groups: the largest group is made up of adults aged 26 to 40 and children aged 0 to 18. However, while a larger number of middle-income adults leave the central working-class neighbourhoods compared with low-income adults, the situation is reversed for children: the working-class households which leave the central working-class neighbourhoods to live on the outskirts of Brussels have more children.

Figure 8. Age structure of migrations between the central working-class neighbourhoods and the Brussels Urban Region. 1st, 2nd and 3rd, and 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th deciles (sum of three net flows 2005-2008, 2008-2010 and 2010-2013).



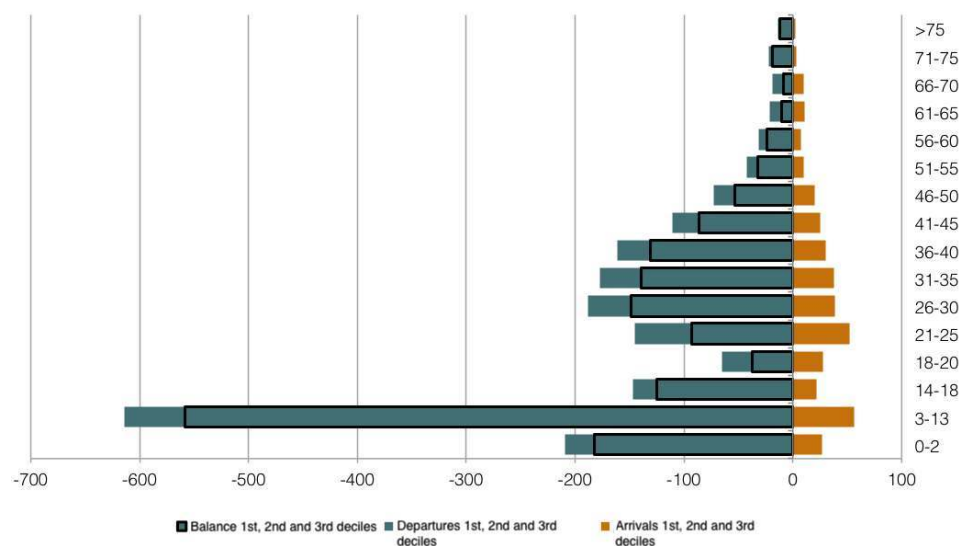
Arrivals: arrivals from the Brussels Urban Region to the central working-class neighbourhoods.

Departures: departures from the central working-class neighbourhoods to the Brussels Urban Region.

Geographical definition of the *Brussels Urban Region*: figure 1

SOURCE: BCSS, PROCESSING S. DE LAET (2017)

Figure 9. Age structure of migrations between the central working-class neighbourhoods and the Dender valley. 1st, 2nd and 3rd deciles (sum of three net flows 2005-2008, 2008-2010 and 2010-2013).



Arrivals: arrivals from the Dender valley to the central working-class neighbourhoods.

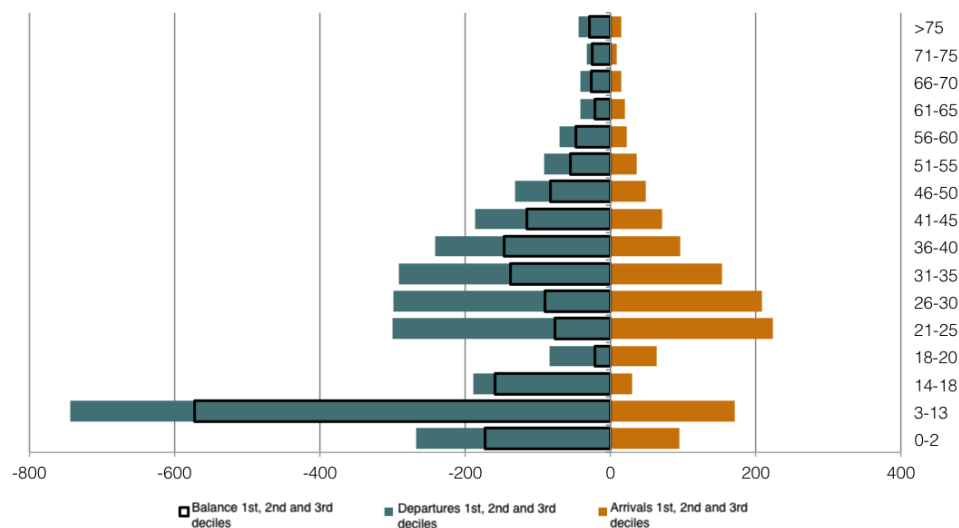
Departures: departures from the central working-class neighbourhoods to the Dender valley.

Geographical definition of the *Dender valley*: figure 1

SOURCE: BCSS, PROCESSING S. DE LAET (2017)

- 40 Figure 9 shows that the migrations of the working-class categories between the central working-class neighbourhoods and the Dender valley have the same profile as in figure 8. This suggests that this space represents the distant outskirts of Brussels for low-income households.
- 41 With respect to migrations between the central working-class neighbourhoods and the Walloon valley, figure 10 also presents a similar profile, yet with a proportion of young children which is greater than the other two. It also shows that for people aged 21 to 35 – when there is a high level of residential mobility – the balance between these migrations is almost equal (same number of arrivals and departures). The Walloon valley receives large families from the central working-class neighbourhoods of Brussels, and many low-income households leave the Walloon valley to go there, which is probably an indication of the socioeconomic proximity of these two areas.

Figure 10. Age structure of migrations between the central working-class neighbourhoods and the Walloon valley. 1st, 2nd and 3rd deciles (sum of three net flows 2005-2008, 2008-2010 and 2010-2013)



Arrivals: arrivals from the Walloon valley to the central working-class neighbourhoods.

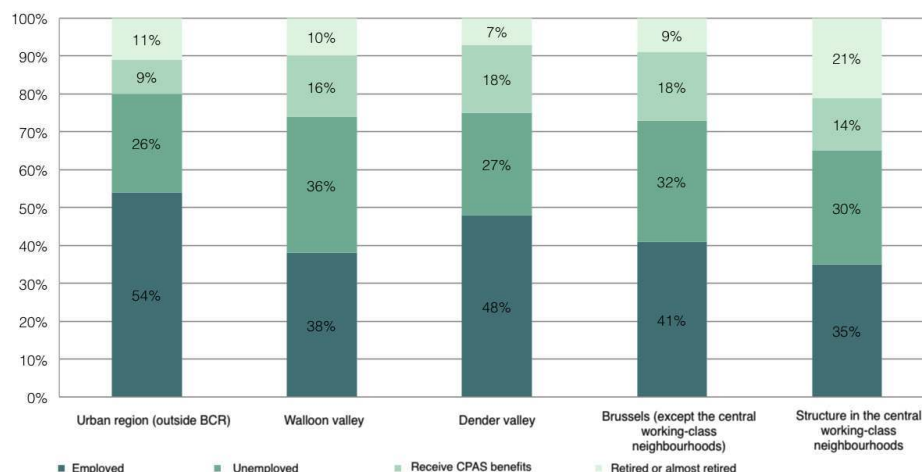
Departures: departures from the central working-class neighbourhoods to the Walloon valley.

Geographical definition of the *Walloon valley*: figure 1

SOURCE: BCSS, PROCESSING S. DE LAET (2017)

3.2. Position on the job market

Figure 11. Structure of the resident and departing population of the central working-class neighbourhoods according to position on the job market, for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd deciles (sum of three net flows 2005-2008, 2008-2010 and 2010-2013)



POPULATION CONSIDERED: PEOPLE OVER AGE 18 WHO ARE NOT STUDENTS (ACCORDING TO BCSS NOMENCLATURE). POSITION AT THE BEGINNING OF THE PERIOD.

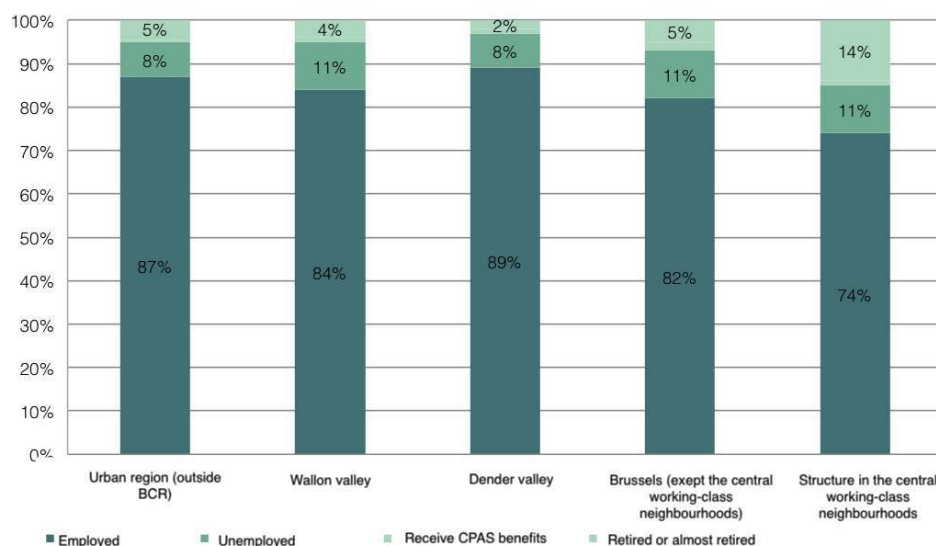
SOURCE: BCSS, PROCESSING S. DE LAET

- 42 While 35 % of adults from the low-income deciles who live in the central working-class neighbourhoods are employed, this proportion reaches 54 % for those who live on the outskirts, 48 % for those who move to the Dender valley, and 38 % for those who move to

the Walloon valley. Thus, among the working classes, those who are employed leave the central working-class neighbourhoods more than the unemployed or those who receive CPAS benefits. Furthermore, there are more stable households which move to the outskirts of Brussels and the Dender valley than to the Walloon valley. The low-income people who have reached or have almost reached retirement age tend to be less mobile.

- 43 Even among the working-class categories, the residential movements result in a social and spatial selection. On the one hand, the stable working-class households settle in the traditional suburban areas as well as in the Dender valley.
- On the other hand, the less economically stable working-class households settle in the Walloon industrial valley.

Figure 12. Structure of the resident and departing population of the central working-class neighbourhoods according to position on the job market, for the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th deciles (sum of three net flows 2005-2008, 2008-2010 and 2010-2013).



POPULATION CONSIDERED: PEOPLE OVER AGE 18 WHO ARE NOT STUDENTS (ACCORDING TO BCSS NOMENCLATURE). POSITION AT THE BEGINNING OF THE PERIOD.

SOURCE: BCSS, PROCESSING S. DE LAET

- 44 It may, however, be observed that for middle-income households, these variations are much less significant: the Dender and Walloon valleys do not appear to receive more unemployed people than the traditional outskirts of Brussels. This suggests that other indicators should be used to complete this analysis, such as, for example, level of education as well as occupancy status.

3.3. More or less stable families

- 45 The age structures as well as the situation on the job market of people who leave the central working-class neighbourhoods reveal two types of profile in particular: on the one hand, households with many children and with greater socioeconomic difficulty which move to the Walloon valley; and on the other hand, households with a demographic profile typical of migrations related to a stage of life (young adults with children), which move to the traditional outskirts of Brussels (urban region) and the

Dender valley, which seem to be an extension of the traditional outskirts for the less well-off households.

Conclusion

- 46 While the main destination of the working classes from the central neighbourhoods of Brussels is not new, it may nevertheless be surprising: are the immediate outskirts not one of the most expensive areas in Belgium? How is it that many disadvantaged households are moving there? Let us point out one of the pitfalls faced by geographers: by working too much with the averages, the internal variability of the study areas is overlooked. The immediate outskirts of Brussels are of course inhabited by many well-off and even very well-off households, but we must not forget that they are also home to many less well-off households, living in houses which do not correspond to the classic and allegorical “detached house with garden”. These working-class households have a demographic profile similar to the middle classes: households with young children. In addition to these classic suburban locations, we have identified two other places of destination: firstly, a distant suburban area in the Dender valley, with a demographic and economic profile similar to the average for the urban region: one out of two adults who moves there is employed, while this is the case for only one out of three in the central working-class neighbourhoods. Secondly, the Walloon valley, which is an industrial area where the current insecurity could be reinforced by the arrival of populations from Brussels with a low employment rate and made up of large families.
- 47 The outskirts of Brussels and the Dender valley therefore attract stable working-class households at the expense of central working-class neighbourhoods. As regards the Walloon valley, in addition to the remoteness, there is also a social stigma surrounding these places, with very few economic opportunities due to their distance from the employment areas and the weakness of the local economy. Are they in fact places of banishment?
- 48 At this stage, many questions remain unanswered. With respect to the households, many questions should be approached using a qualitative analysis: given the essential role played by the working-class neighbourhood in the subsistence of households, what happens when households are far away? Is there the possibility for them to implement (social and economic) activities in their new living environment, which are essential to their survival? Or are they forced to commute or remain isolated? How does the variability of the places of arrival influence these possibilities? Is the use of new support networks easier in certain places of arrival than in others? What are the realities experienced by working-class households? And which factors determine whether they move to the nearby outskirts, outlying areas or industrial cities and areas?
- 49 As regards our knowledge about the working classes, the consideration of their residential movements appears to be an interesting approach to understanding the divisions and variability within this complex social class.
- 50 For the places of arrival which lack demographic and economic dynamism and which often have affordable housing (Charleroi, La Louvière, etc), it would be interesting to study the possible consequences of these migrations. Paradoxically, could the arrival of poor (and even insecure) households from a city where the cost of living is high have a

cascade effect on the standard of living of the disadvantaged populations already living there, in particular via an increase in property prices?

- 51 With respect to Brussels, and in particular the central working-class neighbourhoods, the departure of stable (i.e. close to the job market) working-class households to the outskirts acts as a sort of social and spatial selection. The implications of such a selection may be significant, in particular in terms of social mix in local schools [Marissal, 2017]. On the other hand, in Brussels as well as at national level, these neighbourhoods continue to act as places of reception for (mainly disadvantaged) immigrant populations [Grippa *et al.*, 2015]. These populations eventually add to the flow of stable working-class households leaving Brussels several years later. In this respect, it is undoubtedly simplistic to consider the central working-class neighbourhoods only from the perspective of poverty and economic difficulties. They are also places of reception, where social, cultural and economic capital is generated.
- 52 Finally, let us bear in mind that 30 % of people who leave RBC to live on the outskirts have a low income and are almost never included in the political rhetoric, which is all too often focused exclusively on “the exodus of the Brussels middle class”. It is becoming too expensive for middle-income households to live in Brussels, but how about those with the lowest income?

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NOTES

1. The middle class was defined here based on personal income tax declarations for 2008. The households with an income between 75 % and 150 % of the average national income were included in the middle class. [Verdonck *et al.*, 2012, p. 5]

2. We are referring in particular to the studies mandated by the Brussels-Capital Region, " *Évolution, caractéristiques et attentes de la classe moyenne bruxelloise*" by VERDONCK *et al.* 2012, as well as the recent calls by Innoviris on the exodus of the middle class.

3. Source: monitoringdesquartiers.brussels, IBSA.

4. By stage of life, we are referring to the different stages which individuals typically experience: studies, living as a couple, splitting up, parenthood, access to property, adaptation of the size of housing to a new size of the household, etc. This does not mean that all individuals experience these stages, but they are very closely linked to migratory behaviour. Thus, many young people move to the city during or after their studies, many young couples with children (or who plan to have children) move to bigger homes in particular on the outskirts, the death of a partner later on in life results in residential movements, etc. [Eggerickx *et al.*, 2007]

5. As it was not conceivable to obtain data for all of Belgium, we therefore selected a sub-space.
 6. This database combines different databases of social security organisations as well as the national register.
 7. We have analysed over three periods the individuals who have not had the same location at the beginning and end of the period. These results were then added. Our results are therefore the sum of three net flows over the 2005-2013 period. It is understood that the measurements of migrations are never precise as they are calculated discreetly, whereas the migrations of individuals take place continuously, with no relation to the calendar year.
 8. We therefore know nothing about immovable property or the occupancy status of housing.
 9. For each household, all of the available income was added and then divided according to the number and age of members of the household. The first adult is worth 1, the other members of the household over age 14 are worth 0.5 and the members under age 14 are worth 0.3.
 10. The deciles classify the population into ten equal groups according to their income. In order to determine them, the people are classified from poorest to richest, and then the population is divided into ten groups of equal size. There are therefore as many people in the first decile (the poorest 10 %) as there are in the second, and so on.
 11. By outskirts of Brussels, we are referring to the municipalities in the Walloon and Flemish regions situated in the *Brussels Urban Region*. This space was defined by Van Hecke *et al.* in 2009 based on the 2001 census, and takes into account the influence of Brussels beyond its administrative boundaries: employment centre, cultural activities, commercial activities, etc. See figure 1.
 12. We have calculated this number based on our relative values and IBSA absolute values (i.e. 8 % of 37 475 people).
 13. Given that the circles for which the absolute number is low or non-existent are not represented, the map may appear imbalanced.
 14. From the central working-class neighbourhoods, 48 % of people who leave BCR to live outside the Region have a low income. Thus, in each place of arrival, while they account for more than 48 % of those who arrive from the central working-class neighbourhoods, this destination is considered to be specific to them.
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ABSTRACTS

Residential movements from the territory of the Brussels-Capital Region to suburban municipalities in Flanders and Wallonia have usually been studied from the angle of the middle classes. However, today, 30 % of people who leave the Region to live elsewhere in Belgium are part of the working classes. The urban working classes are subject to dual pressure: social, on the one hand, with the destructuring of the salary model, the shortage of jobs and economic insecurity; and spatial, on the other hand, in particular due to the increase in the cost of housing in the city. Faced with this pressure, certain working-class households have chosen to move outside the Brussels-Capital Region. Following the works which drew attention to these processes of “modest suburbanisation” in particular in France, this article focuses on the significance of this phenomenon in the case of Brussels. It also highlights the places of destination of the working-class households which leave the central working-class neighbourhoods of Brussels. From the point of view of the latter, the movements towards the municipalities on the nearby

outskirts or other cities result in a sort of social and spatial selection with significant implications for the places they are leaving.

Les déménagements depuis le territoire de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale vers les communes périurbaines de Flandre ou de Wallonie sont classiquement étudiés sous l'angle des classes moyennes. Pourtant, aujourd'hui, 30 % des personnes quittant la Région pour s'installer ailleurs en Belgique, sont issues des classes populaires. Les classes populaires urbaines font face à une double pression, sociale d'une part avec la déstructuration du modèle salarial, les pénuries d'emplois et l'insécurité économique ; spatiale d'autre part, notamment du fait de l'augmentation des coûts du logement en ville. Face à ces pressions, certains ménages des classes populaires optent pour un déménagement hors de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale. À la suite de travaux qui ont attiré l'attention sur de tels processus de « périurbanisation modeste », notamment en France, cet article s'intéresse à l'importance de ce phénomène dans le cas bruxellois. Il met également en évidence les espaces de destination des ménages populaires qui quittent les quartiers populaires centraux bruxellois. Du point de vue de ces derniers, ces départs vers des communes de périphérie proche ou vers d'autres villes opèrent une forme de tri socio-spatial dont les implications sont importantes pour ces espaces de départ.

De verhuizingen vanuit het Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest naar de randstedelijke gemeenten van Vlaanderen of Wallonië worden doorgaans onderzocht met als insteek de stadsvlucht van de middenklassen. Vandaag de dag komt echter 30 % van de personen die vanuit het Gewest naar elders in België verhuizen, uit de volksklassen. De stedelijke volksklassen zijn blootgesteld aan een tweevoudige druk: enerzijds een sociale druk wegens de uitholling van het loonmodel, het tekort aan werkgelegenheid en de economische onzekerheid. Anderzijds een ruimtelijke druk wegens de stijging van de huisvestingskosten in de stad. Geconfronteerd met die druk beslissen sommige gezinnen uit de volksklassen om weg te trekken uit het Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest. Naar aanleiding van werken die de aandacht op dergelijke processen van “bescheiden randverstedelijking”, onder meer in Frankrijk, hebben gevestigd, onderzoekt dit artikel de omvang van dit fenomeen in Brussel. Het verduidelijkt eveneens wat de bestemmingen zijn van de gezinnen uit de volksklassen die wegtrekken uit de centrale volkswijken van Brussel. Vanuit hun standpunt zorgen de verhuizingen naar gemeenten in de nabijgelegen rand of naar andere steden voor een vorm van sociospatiale selectie met grote gevolgen voor de vertrekgebieden.

INDEX

Mots-clés: aire métropolitaine, population, inégalités sociales

Subjects: 3. démographie – immigration – société multiculturelle

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